1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

This so-called democratic streak is also abundantly attested by folk-tales which give incidental and intimate pictures of petty details in the life of kings. There is one in which a king gives instructions for caring for his field while he is absent on a war party; another which tells of a fine levied on a man who while hiding up a tree accidentally urinated on a king; another, of a king who in a time of hunger himself climbed a tree for the *epōlē* fruit and nearly starved when the prop by which he had climbed was taken away. Recent arrivals in Africa upon meeting some king just coming up from work in his fields may at first conclude, as did I, that this extreme of 'democracy' is due to the low estate to which royalty has fallen in these latter days, but these historical and legendary references show that this 'democracy', such as it is, is not a degeneration but an essential part of the picture.

With this I shall have to leave royalty. I trust that enough of the picture has been given, and enough also to show what inherent interest would lie in a study of such a Divine King who is at the same time a sort of 'democratic' leader. Should 'indirect rule' ever come to this part of Africa, a resurrection of the royal office would be the order of the day as has been the case in Tanganyika Territory and in the Belgian Congo. For this additional reason an early and a thorough treatment of the subject is to be desired.

Sub-Tribes

Each of the kings of the Ovimbundu was an overlord, for the tribe was made up of a number of sub-tribes called *atumbu* (plural), a word derived from the verb *oku tumbulula*, to transplant. Some of these princes, whether of the blood-royal or not, themselves established dynasties, while others were newly appointed and promoted from time to time. Some of the *atumbu* were ruled by court officials not of royal birth, while others belonged to separate dynasties some of which were natives of the respective regions, at least more anciently native than was the paramount royal family. The kingdom of Bailundu had about 200 *atumbu*, each of which had from 3 to 300 villages or more, and a number of the larger *atumbu* were themselves made up of several smaller

Lacerda in *Annaes Mar. e Col.*, 5 Ser., p. 488 f.; L. Magyar, *Reisen in Süd-Afrika* (tr. Hunfalvy, Pesth, 1859), p. 278.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

582 Cross-cousin marriage of the type practised by the Sotho[1] or Venda[2] tribes is quite foreign to Umbundu life. It is possible that the Ovimbundu formerly had some such type of cross-cousin marriage, but not for a very long time. Among the seventy-five schedules which I have collected illustrating marriage arrangements there are a few describing marriages which took place about ninety years ago. Magyar also wrote of the financial arrangements made for marriage in Viye about 1850.[3] Both of these sources, together with native tradition, indicate that, at least with regard to the financial arrangements, the cross-cousin type of marriage has not been practised by the Ovimbundu for more than one hundred
582 years. On the other hand, the Ovimbundu know nothing of the
171 exogamous marriage demanded by the Herero,[4] the Zulu,[5] &c. The Umbundu ideal includes marriage with a cross-cousin, but also goes out into the wider kinship group, as does the type of marriage of the Thonga,[6] which in turn is linked with that of the Ndau and the Shona group.[7]

582 The Umbundu principle that only 'those whose blood has
●174 touched', or who can 'count' relatives in common, has for a very long time admitted of liberal application. There are cases on record of individuals belonging to regions as widely separated as Ciyaka and Ngalangi contracting marriage *after* having properly 'counted' their common relationship. These cases refer to grandparents of the present generation. It is probable that the diverse racial and cultural elements which have fused to form the Ovimbundu people long ago made imperative the broadening of the cross-cousin type of marriage to the 'ideal' or 'classic' form of (present) Umbundu tradition. An analogous process (with modifications) has continued to operate until to-day this very ideal of marriage within the kinship group is losing its hold in favour of yet more 'liberal' practices.

601 In summary, the Umbundu terminology for the relative by marriage and also the connexion between the ideas of relation by marriage and relation by blood may be seen by the following:

[1] W. M. Eiselen, 'Preferential Marriage: Correlation of the various modes among the Bantu of South Africa', *Africa*, 1928, pp. 413–28.
[2] H. A. Stayt, *The Bavenda* (London, 1931), chaps. xi and xv.
[3] Magyar, op. cit., p. 282 f.
[4] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 187; Irle, op. cit., p. 89.
[5] Krige, op. cit., pp. 34–5. [6] Junod, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 253–64.
[7] Hoernlé in Shapera, op. cit., p. 93 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

rites. It seems, however, that it is largely by imitation that the camps have spread from Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi into adjoining regions. The girls' camps have been less often imitated in these other regions than have those for boys. Whether these rites may have been taken over by the Ovimbundu from the practice of neighbouring peoples, or whether they may have survived from the customs of a culture previously prevalent in the region, is a question. In favour of the latter hypothesis is the fact that nearly all the neighbouring peoples seem to have or to have had these rites in one form or another and also that certain of the Umbundu kings are required to be circumcised before they can assume office. On the other hand, if the camps were held at all in former times, they must have been exceedingly inconspicuous to have escaped the notice of all the older writers. Bastos (1909) stated 'The Ovimbundu proper do not practise it (circumcision).'[1] Neither Silva Porto (1840–90), nor Magyar (1849–57), nor Pinheiro de Lacerda (*c.* 1790) makes any reference to initiation rites. The missionaries who came to the country in 1880 seem first to have encountered these camps on the Luimbi borders about 1900 but elsewhere hardly before 1915. The conclusion seems to be that it was toward the end of the rubber trade (1911) that the initiation camps were either revived or taken over from the neighbouring cultures to the south and east.[2] Whether initiation rites may spread further among the Ovimbundu or not remains to be seen. Their main emphasis seems to be quite contrary to the more typical trend of Umbundu education. The initiation camps of Ngalangi and Kakonda with their definite break from, and contrast to, the routine of life not only differ from the regular method of instruction but are quite contrary to it. In their methods of educating the young, the Ovimbundu certainly may be characterized as casual. The special times and occasions of education are the regular cycles of the social and economic life and special discipline to enforce specific teaching is used but rarely. The

[1] Bastos, op. cit., p. 50.

[2] Differences in these rites as practised by the various neighbouring tribes would form an interesting study. The majority initiate both boys and girls at or near puberty but some practise infant circumcision or circumcision at weaning or at the appearance of the permanent teeth. The Ambo are said to have let boys' initiation lapse but to attach much importance to rites for girls (Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., pp. 27–31). I do not know of any nearby tribes which have for girls either any excision or elongation of the labia. Various tests of virginity are used.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

hardship and the cruelty of the initiation camps have their parallel in the trading and slave-raiding expeditions of the past, but this is practically the only recognizable likeness. May it not be that initiation camps were adopted or revived to fill the lacuna that came about when trading expeditions ceased? As an 'educational institution' they do not seem to fit into the culture.

Whether with or without initiation rites, adolescence is largely preparation for marriage and full adult life. Traditionally, adolescence is not a time of conflict or of stress. Young people who as children had already assumed in considerable degree the responsibilities of life met the onset of puberty and made the transition to adult life without fuss or flourish. On the whole there was relatively small chance for conflict between the generations, since the place of each is recognized as mutually complementary. Nor was there competition between the sexes. This ordered and well-balanced society began to change with the rubber trade, and with the beginning of the present century changes have come rapidly. Contract and *corvée* labour have brought profound changes, especially for the young men. As for the girls, a few have gone to the towns; relatively few however, other than those who attend a boarding-school, lead a life essentially different from that which has been traditionally theirs. Conflict between the generations, adolescence as a period of stress, delinquence, hysteria, and other problems, some of them characteristic of our own culture, are beginning to appear among the young people of the mission schools. I feel that these manifestations are quite uncharacteristic of Umbundu culture.

As for adult life, there are no recognized divisions or separate periods. Adulthood comes with marriage and marriage is only recognized as fully complete with the birth of a child. The early years of marriage and family rearing are years of much hard work with less time for leisure or enjoyment than either before or after. It is not postponed, however, on that account. If the young man marries relatively late, it is largely because of the very considerable economic burdens involved. Singleness is coveted by no one. The Umbundu ideal is mature life when one may have acquired competence, but at any rate is assured of descendants and care in old age. There is not, however, any ceremonial status such as the fixing of the wax ring among the Thonga,[1] nor does the mature Ocimbundu cease to do manual labour. There may be some

[1] Junod, op. cit., 1927, vol. i, p. 129 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

101 to-day.[1] The principal Umbundu-speaking groups may be listed
631 as follows:

I. *Independent kingdoms* (in approximate order of their present population):

Mbailundu (*Bailundo*).
Viye (*Bie* or *Bihe*).
Wambu (*Huambo*, *Huamba*, or even *Hambo*).
Ciyaka (*Quiyaca* or *Quiaca*).
Ngalangi (*Galangue*).
Civula[2] (*Quibula*).
Ndulu[2] (*Andulo*, *Ondulo* or even *Ondura*).
Cingolo (*Quingolo*).
Kalukembe (*Caluquembe*, *Caluguembe*, or even *Caluqueme*).
Sambu[2] (*Sambo* or *Sambos*).
Ekekete (*Quiquete*).
Kakonda or Cilombo-coñoma (*Caconda* or *Quilombo*).
Citata (*Quitata*).

[636] II. *Kingdoms generally tributary but not integral parts of the kingdoms to which they owed allegiance*:

Kasongi (*Cassongue*)—generally a tributary of Bailundu.
Ngalanga (*Galanga*)—generally a tributary of Bailundu.
Civanda (*Quibanda*)—generally a tributary of Bailundu.
Namba—generally a tributary of Bailundu.
Sanga—generally a tributary of Bailundu.
Cenge (*Chiengue*)—generally a tributary of Bailundu.
Cipeyo (*Quipeyo*)—a tributary of Bailundu or Wambu.
Mbongo (*Bongo*)—generally a tributary of Wambu.
Elende (*Lende*)—generally a tributary of Ciyaka.

167 Nearly all of these groups are listed in the report of 1799 to
• 174 which we have referred, and many of them may be identified on the map of 1776. How long before that had they lived in these their present homes? Since it is already well established that none of the Southern Bantu are autochthonous, we shall not stop to ask

[1] Neither of these accounts mentioned Kasongi, which, according to genealogical evidence, is probably one of the most recently formed of the Umbundu-speaking groups. Both accounts made the non-Umbundu-speaking regions of 'Quibala' (Cipala), Mussende, and Cella tributaries of Bailundu. This was the state of affairs as late as 1893.

[2] See *supra*, p. 167, n. 2.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

that question concerning the Ovimbundu. Rather, whence did they come and when? Can the lines of their migrations now be ascertained? Can their racial origins be determined with even approximate certainty?

The available evidence regarding origins and migrations of the Ovimbundu is mainly of five sorts: (1) linguistic; (2) legendary, whether of the several groups of the Ovimbundu or of the tribes from which they seem to have sprung; (3) historical; (4) evidence from place-names; and (5) evidence of comparative attitudes and culture-traits as between the Ovimbundu and their neighbours. In addition, we might list evidence of physical measurements and blood-group tests, but such evidence is not yet available for the Ovimbundu.

Tribal Origins

Language Affinities. As I pointed out in the introductory chapter, by linguistic classification the Ovimbundu belong to the western 'province' or group of the Southern Bantu. Linguistically, the Ovimbundu belong with their southern neighbours, the so-called 'Bangala'[1] and with the Ambo and Herero. The northern and eastern neighbours all belong to other language groups. This is a fact that must not be lost sight of, especially since Umbundu has been so often confused with the so-called 'Kimbundu' of the Ndongo or Angola kingdom. We are not surprised to find an author of 1846 declare that 'From the Congo to Cabo Negro (Alexander Bay) these black natives all speak the same language (*bunda*) with small changes of dialect';[2] but when this confusion is compounded in works laying claim to considerable value as linguistic and ethnological studies, as, for example, one which was published by a well-known museum in 1930,[3] a protest is in order.

[1] The Ndombe, Nganda, Cilengi, Cipungo, Muila, Mulondo, Humbi, Gambue, &c. I do not know that the term 'Bangala' may be applied with correctness to these people. I only use it for convenience. See 'Notas Etnográficas sôbre os povos indígenas do Distrito da Huila', *Boletim Geral das Colónias*, fev. 1935, p. 41.

[2] Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios sôbre a Statistica d'Angola e Benguella*, part i, p. 196.

[3] See F. u. W. Jaspert, *Die Völkerstämme Mittel-Angolas* (Frankfort, 1930). It is reported that the spurious nature of the works of these writers has been exposed by Baumann and others, but although I have searched, apart from a rather ambiguous footnote in Baumann's *Lunda*, I have found no such references, and am unable to say whether this has been done. The origin of the erroneous concept of a Bunda language (also called Bundu, or Mbundu), has been traced, and correctly I think on the whole, by Max Buchner, 'Die Ambakisten' (in

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

p.179

had Portuguese names, and tradition speaks of a great accession of mulatto stock, which also is confirmed by observation.

The Umbundu-speaking border groups are interesting. Ngamba was formerly occupied by the Songo and has been peopled by Ovimbundu coming from near the capital of Viye only within the past forty years. Cengi, Sanga, Namba, and Kasongi on the northern flank of Bailundu have probably all only recently become Umbundu-speaking groups. Kasongi is one of the largest groups which paid tribute to Bailundu, and has had a line of Umbundu-speaking kings for more than a hundred years; but judging from genealogical evidence the bulk of the people have not been Ovimbundu that long. Civula is another large group and its uncertain feudal status has been noted. Perhaps the most interesting of the border groups, at least from a linguistic standpoint, is Kalukembe. The royal house seems to have come from Ciyaka and it has been claimed that in Kalukembe the kingship is inherited by the mother's brother's son. This is not supported by the only local traditional history which I have been able to secure and requires further investigation. At any rate it is through the maternal line that the commoners of all the Umbundu-speaking groups inherit, and it is noteworthy that this is also true of the kingship among the 'Bangala' and the Ambo tribes.[1] The 'Bangala' people have clan organizations and are exogamous, so that they may marry in any of the related 'Bangala' groups, and for this purpose they include the Kalukembe but not others of the Ovimbundu.[2] Finally, the variations with which Umbundu is spoken in Kalukembe[3] point to closer connexions with the language-group of the 'Bangala'. There are certain areas which at the present day seem to be undergoing a linguistic 'Umbundu-ization'. This is most evident in the coast towns such as Novo Redondo, Lobito, Catumbela, Benguela,

[1] See Estermann, 'Notas Etnográficas sôbre os povos do Distrito da Huila' in *Boletim Geral das Colónias*, fev. 1935, p. 63; Hahn, *et al.*, *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*, p. 8.

[2] This last item was learned from Mulondo people. The above-cited article deals only with the people of the District of Huila, while 'Bangala' people live also in other adjoining districts.

[3] Compare Umbundu language work of H. Chatelain and others of the 'Mission Philafricaine' in Kalukembe, as versus illustrations of Umbundu used by Johnston, Meinhof, *et al.* Evidently the native 'Mohongo' taken to Paris by Homburger of the Mission Rohan-Chabot, was a native of Kalukembe, for the 'Bailoundou' vocabulary taken from him is of the Kalukembe variation. (See *Mission Rohan-Chabot*, t. III, f. 1.)

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

197 and Mossamedes. The region of Catumbela, and perhaps of Benguela, seems to have been subjected to migrations of Ovimbundu, or of proto-Ovimbundu, between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and it is probable that some of these groups early established themselves there permanently.[1] At the present time peoples of many tribes make up the population of these towns and of the surrounding regions, but Umbundu is already the dominant speech, and in Lobito and Catumbela almost no other Bantu language is heard. Certain other areas on the fringe of the Umbundu lands now seem to be in process of 'Umbunduization', at least as regards language. This does not seem to have taken place in Musende, in Cipala (Quibala), or in Sela, in spite of the long time during which they owned the king of Bailundu as their overlord. Just now, however, such a process seems to be taking place in Mbuiva (Amboiva), in Cisanji (area of Bocoio), in Nganda, and in Cikomba (Chicomba, south of Caconda).

173 101 ●174 167 Some of the neighbouring peoples have traditions of migrations which corroborate the traditions of the Ovimbundu. The Nganda say that they formerly lived in the region of Wambu, around the rocks of Nganda-la-Kawe, and that they moved down-country for two reasons: (1) to escape Wambu-Kalunga and his penchant for eating their children; (2) to be by themselves to practise the rite of circumcision. When they migrated to their present home, the kingdom of Ciyaka, they say, was not yet established.

Traditions of the Herero and Ambo peoples may have bearing on the problem of the migrations of the Ovimbundu. Dr. Vedder concludes from tradition and genealogical evidence that the Herero must have crossed the Kunene 'about the year 1700'.[2] Some of the tribes of Angola with which the Njimba-Herero claim relationship[3] may easily be identified as belonging to the 'Bangala' group, as, for example, the Ovangambue, the Ovangumbi, and the Ovatjerenge, which are plainly the va Ngambue, the va Khumbi (or Nkhumbi), and the va Cilengi, respectively. Other names in the list are very much like some place-names in the Umbundu country.

Traditions of the Songo and Lunda people have already been

[1] According to a Ciyaka tradition. Also see A. Bastos, *Monographia de Catumbella*, pp. 6, 7; L. Cordeiro (ed.), *Benguella e seu sertão*, 1617–22; Ravenstein (ed.), op. cit., p. 19 f.

[2] Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 157.

[3] Loc. cit.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

mentioned. H. A. Dias de Carvalho collected the traditional history of the people of Lunda, which attempted to show that the Imbangala, the Songo, and the Cokue, or rather their reigning families, were descended from the royal house of the Bongo people of Lunda.[1] Through Ilunga, father of the first Muata Yanvo, this author connects these people, or at least all of them except the Imbangala, with the Luba.[2] Torday offers the hypothesis that Ilunga (or Ihunga) may have been a Bushongo prince.[3] I have heard the hypothesis offered that the Songo were in effect an offshoot of the Bushongo people, but it seems that such knowledge as we have of the Songo cannot be said to substantiate this theory. Should these theories prove to accord with the facts, we could claim a long traditional descent for the people of our study in consideration of the careful work done by Torday in tracing the genesis of the Bushongo.[4]

Historical Evidence. Turning from tribal traditions to the solid ground of historical evidence, regarding the migrations in question, it is immediately evident that there is no lack of witnesses. The regions with which we are dealing have been known to Europe since 1482, when the expedition under Diogo Cão first sailed up the Congo River and sent ambassadors representing King John II of Portugal to the king of Kongo. Diogo Cão returned in 1485–6, and then in 1491 there came a great expedition with a specially appointed embassy and a mission of ten Franciscan friars.[5] From this time on the Kongo was not without European observers. The earliest record which we have of native migrations in what is now Angola was the invasion of the kingdom of Kongo in 1568,[6] when it was overrun by hordes of terrible 'Jagas',[7] from the east. The reigning king, Dom Alvaro I (Nenemi-a-lukeni-luambemba), and his forces were so utterly routed that his only resource was to

[1] Dias de Carvalho, op. cit., p. 76 f.

[2] Op. cit., p. 65.

[3] E. Torday, *On the Trail of the Bushongo*, pp. 170, 281.

[4] Ibid., chap. xiii.

[5] See João de Barros, *Decadas* I, liv. 3; Ruy de Pina, *Chronica*, p. 174 f.; Garcia de Resende, *Chronica*, pp. 155 ff.; Fr. Luiz de Sousa, *História de S. Domingos*, pt. ii, liv. vi, c. 8.

[6] There has been considerable disagreement over this date, which has been variously reported as 1558, 1568, and 1570; 1568 seems the most likely date, see Ravenstein (ed.), *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell*, p. 119 f.

[7] There are many spellings of this name, according to the language, or even the caprice, of the observer. The commoner forms are: Jagas, Jakas, Iagges, Giaghi, Giaki, and Ayaka. This last is probably the more nearly correct.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

with that which has already been reviewed, might make it possible to determine the demography of the Benguela Highland prior to the formation of the Umbundu kingdoms. It is also further evidence as to the demographic make-up of the Ovimbundu. Some of these recurring place-names evidently represent elements which now constitute separate entities outside the Umbundu kingdoms, although they probably made contributions to the formation of those kingdoms. Others represent elements which probably moved away from the earlier invasions from the north but stayed in their new sites to amalgamate with later arrivals. Some may represent successive splittings-off from a stock which thus settled at various places. Many recurrent place-names could be shown both in this region and outside the language-grouping.

Attitudes toward Other Tribes. Attitudes of the Ovimbundu towards the various neighbouring tribes are instructive. Mention has already been made of the attitude of the southern 'Bangala' people in their inclusion of the Ovimbundu of Kalukembe within their own system of exogamy. The Ovimbundu recognize a common humanity with the peoples who are their neighbours both on the south and on the north. They are all *omanu*,[1] people, or even *vakuetu*, comrades. Similar recognition is not extended to the eastern and south-eastern neighbours who are lumped together under the derogatory term of 'va Ngangela' or *ovingangela*.[2] This eastern region as far as the Great Lakes was the happy hunting-ground of the slave-traders from Viye and from Bailundu. There is a term *olongoya* which is applied to the northern neighbours, but without the derogatory connotation of 'Ngangela'. *Olongoya* has a linguistic connotation as did *barbaroi* in the Greek, and refers to the fact that these neighbours speak what is to the Ovimbundu an unintelligible language. How much of rationalization there may be in these attitudes and prejudices one cannot say, but it seems that in them there is some recognition of tribal origins and relationships, of the fact that across the Benguela Highland migrations have swept from north to south.

Conclusion. In consideration of the above evidence, it is now possible to draw conclusions concerning the origin of the Ovi-

[1] *Omanu* is the Umbundu equivalent for the Nguni *abantu*, which has come to be applied to the whole language family.

[2] This Umbundu attitude is best illustrated by the proverb 'As a grass hut is not a house, so an *ocingangela* (singular) is not a person (*omunu*).'

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

mbundu. They are the result of a fusion of diverse stocks, chiefly of the Southern Bantu and of the Congo or Central Bantu peoples. The ruling families probably were Lunda emigrants for the most part,[1] at least in their origin. It was probably during the seventeenth century that these people entered the Benguela Highland and began to found their respective dynasties. The people whom they encountered in these lands were mostly of Southern Bantu stock, with some 'Ngangela' people in Ndulu, Viye, and Ngalangi. The upper strata of these local populations seem to have moved on with their cattle to join related stocks in the border regions, while the masses seem to have stayed behind to form the nucleus of the Ovimbundu. Especially does this appear to have been the case with the original Southern Bantu stock, for many who were cattle-owners seem to have fled to the drier and more suitable lands in the south and west, while those who stayed must have lost to the invaders such cattle as they had. Only in the south-west (especially Kalukembe) was the Southern Bantu influence of sufficient strength to preserve any semblance of the cattle-culture complex, together with a recognition of kinship from their southern neighbours. Everywhere, it seems, the Southern Bantu nucleus was of sufficient strength to exert a dominant linguistic influence. It is certainly noteworthy that over the whole region a single language has developed with only small dialectic differences[2]—and that without benefit of political union. Commercial intercourse has probably largely supplied the place of the latter.

Historical Development

Dominant Tendency. The origins of the principal groups of the Ovimbundu have been traced in outline from both native and European sources. It now remains to sketch the main lines of

[1] But Viye and Ngalangi traditions *in re* the origin of their ruling families must be borne in mind—traditions also supported by other evidence.

[2] Retention of peculiarities of the parent stock by Kalukembe has been noted. There are certain noticeable differences as between 'up-country' and 'down-country'—roughly divided by the Keve and Kunene Rivers. Each of the outlying regions has its own peculiarities due to local foreign influences. In Kasongi, in Ngalangi, and in Viye these are quite noticeable but can hardly be called separate dialects. Regions of older European occupation—Kakonda and Viye—have taken more from the Portuguese. In consideration of these facts and the further fact that the Viye racial stock had a larger 'Ngangela' element than had other regions, the recent linguistic influence of Viye has been out of all proportion to reality and may be explained by the relatively larger number of missions and missionaries working in that region.

The two largest rivers flowing from the Highland are the Kwanza and the Kunene, both of which flow into the Atlantic Ocean. Between them are the Keve, the Balombo and the Katumbela. The Kubango rises near the source of the Kunene and flows southwards towards the Kalahari Desert. 133

SOILS AND VEGETATION

The foundation of the plateau is a vast slab of primeval crystalline rock, which frequently outcrops in the form of isolated rocks or of massive peaks. Some of these outcrops remain bare, while others are hidden by laterite and soil formed by rock decomposition. Sediments overlying the rocks include unfossiliferous sandstones and conglomerates, considered to be of Palaeozoic age. Much of the soil is poor, in many areas impoverished by use and by erosion; there are however a few alluvial deposits, and on the whole the soil is of better quality than in the adjoining regions to the east, north and south. 134 133

Differences in vegetation between the Highland and the lower zone towards the coast are striking. Characteristic feature of the coastal area is the baobab *(Adansonia digitata)* and in the better-watered areas tropical forests occur. The Highland proper was until recently well-covered with a variety of trees; today, however, except in isolated areas in Bailundu and other regions, grasslands have taken the place of forest and woodland. Native methods of agriculture and annual fires have caused much deforestation, and this has been accentuated by the demands of European settlement and of the Railway, which up to the present time uses principally wood for fuel. 137

CLIMATE

The Highland is well within the Tropical Zone, but altitude and the effect of the south-western Antarctic current combine to produce a moderate climate. The annual variation of temperature is relatively slight; a day's maximum is seldom above 90°F, and may be as low as 60°, but the usual maximum is around 80°. The minimum of 32° or even 30° is sometimes reached in the winter (about May 20th - July 20th), but more usually the minimum is 40° to 50° in the winter, and 50° to 55° for the rest of the year. There is considerably daily variation, especially in the winter, when differences of 42° are often registered. 132

Mean annual rainfall varies from 40 to 60 inches, according to region. In the Highland the rains begin with a few showers during September, increase during October and November, have a break of two to four weeks in December, January or February, and continue until the end of April. The heaviest falls are usually in November and December, occasionally in March.

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND HISTORY(1)

The Ovimbundu people represent a fusion of diverse stocks, chiefly of the Southern Bantu and of the Congo or Central Bantu peoples. The ruling 174 167

(1) This section is a summary of the detailed account given by Childs 1949, pp.164-231.

174 167 families, probably for the most part of Lunda origin, entered the Benguella Highlands during the seventeenth century and began to found their respective kingdoms. The tribes whom they encountered appear to have belonged to the cattle-keeping Ndombe-Nganda or to the Ngangela group.(1) Childs suggests that the upper strata of these local populations must have moved on southwards with their cattle to join related stocks in the border regions, while the masses stayed behind to form the nucleus of the Ovimbundu. The cultural influence of these early inhabitants on the Ovimbundu seems to have been slight, except in the south-west, particularly in Kalukembe, where a semblance of the cattle-culture complex remains, together with a recognition of kinship ties with southern neighbours (see below). The linguistic [197] influence of the Southern Bantu (Ndombe-Nganda) group in the south and west has however been considerable. It is noteworthy that over the whole Ovimbundu region a single language has developed with only small dialectal differences, and that although commercial contact has assisted this development, it has not been fostered by political union between the various segments of the Ovimbundu.

TRADITIONS

173 166 Each of the principal groups listed above (page 2) has separate legends of origin. Usually these traditions refer to the birthplace and adventures of the ancestors of the chiefly families, and only mention the indigenous inhabitants. Childs has made a careful and lucid summary of the traditions of the various groups;(2) these are therefore only very briefly outlined below.

Ndulu. There is evidence that Ndulu may be one of the oldest Ovimbundu kingdoms. The progenitor of the ruling dynasty is said to have come from the region near the confluence of the Kwanza and Lumbo rivers, and to have conquered and expelled the Luimbe, who live today to the east of Ndulu. This migration may have been a result of the prolonged wars between the Portuguese and the Kingdom of Angola,(3) which ended in 1671.

Bailundu. The Bailundu dynasty is said to have its origin in Cipala, a region which remained subject to Bailundu until the end of the nineteenth century, and from which, according to tradition, the king's principal wife comes. Childs estimates the date of the foundation of the dynasty at not earlier than about 1700. The Sambu ruling family is said to descend either from a woman of Bailundu stock or from common stock with the Bailundu.

Viye. Versions of the Viye legend are recorded by Tucker,(4) Serpa Pinto,(5) Silva Porto,(6) and Magyar,(7) and these do not all agree. According to the most widely-known version today, Viye, an elephant-hunter of the Humbi people, tracking game down the Kwanza valley, met and married a princess of the Songo people; their son, Ulundu, founded the Viye chiefdom. From documentary evidence Childs estimates that this must have been in about 1750. This version also suggests that the original inhabitants were of the Ngangela group of tribes.

(1) See above, p.3.
(2) Op.cit., pp.170-81.
(3) To the north of the present Ovimbundu country.
(4) 1927, pp.34f.
(5) 1881, vol.I, pp.156f.
(6) 1942, pp.165-71.
(7) 1859, pp.266f.

7

Magyar's account of the Viye legend is of interest since it suggests a direct link between the movements of the Ovimbundu ancestors and contemporary migrations of the Lunda in the Congo basin and western Angola.(1) Magyar relates that the forefathers of the Viye came from the land of the Moropu (or Lunda(2)) under the two chiefs Kinguri and Schakambindi, conquered the Songo, and settled on the Luanda river, engaging in agriculture between raids. The tribe subsequently sub-divided, one group going southwards to the Kukema river, where Ngangela were living, to found the chiefdom of Viye.

Ngalangi tradition is the only one which attempts a creation myth. Feti, the first chief of Ngalangi, is said to have "come down from above"; having no wives, he went to a lagoon of the Kunene river and caught them as they came out of the reeds. Sons of Feti drove out the Ngangela from what is now Ngalangi country, and founded their principal village.(3) Childs estimates that this must have taken place in about 1750. The village was later attacked unsuccessfully by Ngangela, and this is one of the very few traditions which mention resistance met by the invaders.

Wambu. The first chief, Wambu Kalunga, is said to have come from Sela country, north-west of Bailundu. The Nganda, who now live south-west of Umbundu country and are of Southern Bantu stock, were previously living in Wambu country. The founder of the *Ciyaka* royal family is said to have been a relative of Wambu Kalunga, and to have driven out the Ndombe (also of Southern Bantu stock) from Ciyaka country, probably during the first half of the seventeenth century. Wambu Kalunga is said to have been also the progenitor of the dynasties of *Cingolo, Citata* or *Cikuma, Kalukembe, Elende* and *Ekatete.*(4)

Kakonda, the founder of the Kakonda kingdom, was of northern stock, but born in Ngalangi, whence he was sold as a slave to Benguella. He escaped with his wife, Cilombo, and set up the present kingdom in about 1760.

Cengi, Songo, Namba and *Kasongi* on the northern flank of Bailundu have only recently become Umbundu-speaking. *Kasongi*, one of the largest Bailundu tributaries, has however had a line of Umbundu-speaking chiefs for more than 100 years. *Civula* was listed by Magyar as tributary to Ciyaka. *Kalukembe* is of interest in that it is more clearly linked than other sections of the Ovimbundu with the Nganda-Ambo group. Factors which point to this closer link include: the similarities in language between the two groups; the inheritance of the Kalukembe kingship in the maternal line, as among the Nganda-Ambo group, and not in the paternal line, as among other Ovimbundu;(5) and the fact that the Nganda-Ambo, who have an exogamous clan organisation, may marry in any of the related Nganda-Ambo groups, and for this purpose include Kalukembe but not other Ovimbundu.(6)

(1) McCulloch 1951, pp.9ff., 32ff., 57ff.
(2) Dias de Carvalho 1890, p.66.
(3) According to the same legend, where the Ngalanga rested their loads of food and household goods, sticks took root and became the sycamore figs which to this day encircle the capital village. This circle of trees is a characteristic of the older Ngangela villages.
(4) Childs op.cit., pp.178, 225.
(5) Although descent among Ovimbundu commoners is in the maternal line.
(6) Childs, op.cit., p.179.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

131 The coastal strip
484 was at times traversed by the Ovimbundu who know of the sea and call it *kalunga*. Bihéan caravans crossed to the coast with slaves, as history shows, but the nature of the coastal strip marks it as a western barrier limiting the expansion of the Ovimbundu in that direction. The coast line itself is of the greatest moment in the consideration of historical factors. From Loanda, Benguela, and [177] Mossamedes on the coast, the Portuguese penetrated the interior, so making contacts with the Ovimbundu to the encouragement of caravan trade. The importance of this European contact will be seen in subsequent chapters.

The south and southwest parts of Angola are of particular importance in studying the contacts of the Ovimbundu, but to give here the details of the wealthy cattle-keeping culture of these regions, which were accessible through peaceful proximity, trade, and occasional raiding, would be an anticipation of chapter X, "Culture Contacts." [123] One topographical point is of primary importance; namely, the ease with which the Ovimbundu could descend from their strongholds to the low-lying land of the west and south, whereas the reverse journey is much more difficult for a people unaccustomed to manoeuvring and finding their way among hills.

101 Having described the northern, central, western, and southern areas, there remains only the eastern section to consider; this presents several features of peculiar geographical and ethnological interest. [133] The eastern section of Angola is either slightly undulating or flat, the general characteristic is dryness, and vegetation is somewhat [136] sparse though sufficient to shelter many kinds of antelope.

The major population is the Vachokue, a warlike, hunting people, who follow agricultural pursuits but slightly, and do not keep cattle. Examination of the literature describing early exploration indicates [126] the truculent nature of these eastern people with whom caravans of Ovimbundu were in frequent conflict. Umbundu caravans crossed this country when making their way to Rhodesia, culture contacts with which are discussed in chapter X.

The results of contact of Ovimbundu and Vachokue tribes, so far as physical miscegenation is concerned, are mentioned in chapter "Physical Appearance"; while the social effects of slavery resulting from hostilities are described in chapter VI, "Social Life."

174 Rhodesia is a cattle-raising country, but the hostility of the
231 Vachokue, the great distance from central Angola to Rhodesia, and the general dryness of the country to be crossed, discourage the idea that the Ovimbundu obtained their cattle from Rhodesia. If it is

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

argued that the cattle might have been brought along the course of the Zambezi and Kwando there is the objection that there are here several tsetse fly belts. On the contrary, cattle-producing country in the southwest and south of Angola is far more accessible than the Rhodesian plateau.

In the south there is the cultural habit of digging wells, especially among the Vakuanyama; but the Vachokue have not developed this trait. The substrata underlying the sand of southern Angola hold water which serves through the dry season, a fact which is advantageously employed by the cattle-keepers. The Vachokue lack this well-digging habit, and, even if subsurface water were present, the transient Ovimbundu would have lacked opportunity to dig for it when passing through hostile country.

The acquisition off cattle by the Ovimbundu is of great importance, because it is comcerned with the grafting of a series of pastoral traits on a culture im no way originally associated with pastoral pursuits. The truth of this will later be made clear by examination of historical and ethnological evidence.

Geographical considerations give a picture of the Ovimbundu situated in naturally fortified country from which they had access to four surrounding areas, whose cultural characters agree well with the determinism of topography and climate. The natural advantages of the central highlands,, and the results of contact with each of the adjacent areas, are points which will be developed in appropriate sections throughout the ensuing chapters.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The kernel of the migratory problem of the Ovimbundu is reached when Torday traces out the history of the Kimbundu, for the Kimbundu are present-day neighbors of the Ovimbundu, to whom they are closely allied in language and culture (*ovi* is a Bantu plural prefix, which was perhaps used to express the inclusion of Kimbundu and Babunda under the general name Ovimbundu).

Torday's sifting of the historical evidence results in the conclusion that the Kimbundu came from the northeast, fighting their way to the Luando. These Kimbundu divided, with civil war as a consequence. One section crossed the river Kwanza, south of which they specialized in agriculture after becoming sedentary. Their sub-chief they called the *Kalunga*, which is the present-day word used by the Ovimbundu in greeting their chiefs. Traditions of the Ovimbundu point to the northeast as a center from which they spread at least ten generations ago. The rise of the powerful kingdom of Lunda dates from the seventeenth century, and although the details of this concentration of power in northeast Angola are unknown the general effects are understood. There was a great displacement of tribes in a southerly and southwesterly direction. In connection with the suggestion that the Ovimbundu came from the northeast of Angola, there is the necessity for recording the absence of even a fragment of historical evidence or tribal tradition indicating that the Ovimbundu came from the south or the east of Angola.

Cultural affinities of the Ovimbundu with tribes of the southwest Congo in particular, and with western Bantu culture in general, strongly support the foregoing deductions from historical sources (chapter X).

There is a probability that tribal disturbances resulting from the rise of the Lunda Empire led to a spread of the Vachokue over eastern Angola. Some of the effects of this contact have already been mentioned in chapter II, where contacts of the Ovimbundu and the Vachokue were discussed. The journey brought me into contact with the Vachokue at Cangamba, Katoko, and Ngalangi, of which Cangamba is the most easterly.

Witnessing of initiation ceremonies combined with observation of physique, language, and artifacts, leads me to agree with Torday that Cangamba is probably the ancient center of Vachokue culture. As one proceeds from Cangamba westward this type of culture becomes thinner as the borders of the country occupied by the Ovimbundu are approached. On the border line between the cultures of the Vachokue and the Ovimbundu, notably at Ngongo near Ngalangi,

174 there is tribal and cultural miscegenation. Both Umbundu and
171 Vachokue languages are spoken; boys of Ngalangi were seen to wear
[881] initiation costumes similar to those worn at Cangamba by the Vachokue, but on proceeding farther westward into territory exclusively occupied by the Ovimbundu, such initiation ceremonies are either absent or attenuated in ritual.

144 Elende, one center of research among the Ovimbundu, repre-
101 sents the purest Umbundu speech and culture observable at the present day. But in chapter IV some physical resemblance of the Ovimbundu to the Vachokue is noted. Warfare commonly resulted in the taking of slaves, a fact which might account for an apparent infusion of Vachokue blood in some of the Ovimbundu.

174 The historical data suggest a northern or northeastern starting
167 point of Umbundu migrations. Therefore an inquiry into the ethnology of these areas will be useful in showing the kind of culture with which the Ovimbundu were in contact before their settlement in the Benguela Highlands. If historical sources disclose the nature of northern Angolan culture from the year A.D. 1500 onward, such evidence can then be considered in relation to cultural traits of the Ovimbundu at the present day.

The establishment of strong cultural resemblances between extant Umbundu culture and older cultural patterns of northern Angola, would tend to strengthen the evidence of history respecting the northern origin of the Ovimbundu.

131 The regions dealt with in the following summary of ethnological
174 facts are the Cabinda Enclave to the north of the Congo estuary, the region of San Salvador, the hinterlands of Loanda and Benguela, and the area of northern Angola between Lat. 7° and 9° S. and Long. 13° to 22° E. This covers the whole area with which the Ovimbundu are likely to have been in contact before entering their present home.

175 My survey begins with the observations of Andrew Battell in
101 1596. His account deals mainly with the northwestern part of Angola, a country bordering on and actually including territory now occupied by the Ovimbundu, who in all probability came in contact with the Jaggas, whose habits of life are described by Battell.

Torday and Joyce identify the Jaggas with the present-day Bayaka, whose cultural resemblances to the Ovimbundu are examined later. In my opinion, the Jaggas correspond well with the Bihéan section of the Ovimbundu, an itinerant and exceedingly warlike people.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

175 171 [412] O. Dapper (Description de l'Afrique, 1732, p. 369) shows a scene in which an ax, such as I obtained from the Vasele country, is being used for beheading a slave.

[325] [534] Cavazzi (Istorica descrizione, etc., Bologna, 1687) describes the three kingdoms of Congo, Matamba, and northern Angola. The poison ordeal, the scapegoat, the blacksmith's bellows (pp. 101, 170) are all traits known to the Ovimbundu. The musical instrument made from a large gourd, which has a ridged board attached for rubbing with a stick, is the type I collected. Cavazzi pictures the double iron gong and the long drum held between the knees. He [782] also shows a rain-maker (p. 214) and the sacrifice of two hundred victims at the accession of a king (p. 210).

174 243 [113] Consideration of the history of maize in Africa is of importance in connection with these early writings, as this grain is the staple agricultural product of the Ovimbundu. I am indebted to Dr. Berthold Laufer for access to his unpublished research on this subject. From the following facts one may assume that, in all probability, the maize culture of the Ovimbundu was derived from the Congo region before their migration into the Benguela Highlands.

175 243 Father Jerome Merolla remarks that maize was growing in the neighborhood of San Salvador (1683–92). The native names were *mampunni* and *massambuta;* from this corn an alcoholic beverage was prepared. According to Cavazzi (Ehrmann, Geschichte der merkwürdigsten Reisen, XIII, 1794) maize was not intensively cultivated by the Negroes of lower Guinea, though it thrives well and may be [177] harvested twice or thrice a year. The natives said that the grain was brought by the Portuguese, but they did not esteem it highly, and were accustomed to use it as food for pigs.

Bosman (p. 312) records that prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, Negroes were entirely ignorant of *milho* ("maize"). The account of Duarte Lopez preserved by Filippo Pigafetta states that the Negroes consider maize the vilest of all grains, so that it is given to swine. This contempt and lack of knowledge of the food value, combined with ignorance of methods of preparation, suggest a recent introduction (Pigafetta, translation by M. Hutchinson, 1881, p. 40). Dapper (Description de l'Afrique, 1732, p. 345) also mentions the cultivation of maize. Battell lived as prisoner in northern Angola about the year 1600, consequently his records of the use of the great Guinea wheat (maize), which the natives call *mas-imporro*, give early evidence for the use of this grain (Hakluyt Soc., 1901, pp. 9, 11, 67).

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The foregoing facts, when compared with field work among the Ovimbundu, indicate that the old culture of the Congo and northern Angola bears a strong resemblance to Umbundu culture at the present day. A more detailed analysis of this resemblance is made in chapter X.

The following notes dealing with exploration in Angola (1800–1930) are adduced for critical comparison with my own observations among the Ovimbundu.

The work of Sir R. F. Burton describing the exploration of Lacerda and other Portuguese pioneers, is more useful for geographical than for ethnological information. Lacerda's journey to Czambe, south of Lake Moero, was performed in 1798. A mention of veneration for the dead and consultation of the deceased on all occasions of war or of good fortune, is made (p. 127). These are important points in the present tribal life of the Ovimbundu.

Bowditch (1824) writes from information given to him by Almeida and Saldanha. There are valuable references to the Vacilenge, a people adjacent to the Ovimbundu, who refused to kill their cattle, "rather than do which they will endure famine to extremity." This note was made about Long. 15° E. and Lat. 15° S. (p. 34). The cattle were milked, and cattle-raiding by the Ovimbundu was common at this time. Many present-day Ovimbundu do not milk their cattle, but the Vacilenge still follow their milking custom observed before 1824.

Livingstone's journey through northeast and northern Angola in 1853 contains references to the Vachokue who seemed bent on plunder (I, p. 370). Livingstone noted cotton spinning, which I recorded as an occupation of males of the Ovimbundu at Elende. Livingstone, like other early travelers, encountered caravans of Bihéans (Ovimbundu) bearing elephants' tusks and beeswax, commodities, which, along with slaves, formed the chief merchandise of these caravans from the Benguela Highlands (p. 466). Livingstone notes and sketches (Plate XIII, Fig. 10) the double-handled hoe (p. 442) which is still used.

J. J. Monteiro (I, p. 61) saw the poison ordeal administered. The poison itself was prepared from the thick hard bark of a large tree (*Erythrophlaeum guineense*). The place of observation was Mongue Grande, just south of the Congo estuary, and again Monteiro was present when the poison cup was given to two women at Ambrizette. Of this ordeal there is more to be said when discussing the culture contacts of the Ovimbundu, because the ordeal is a basic factor of

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

114 Umbundu language. The illustrations in photogravure are excellent,
126 but the small-scale map is difficult to follow.

114 As might be expected in a work covering an enormous tract of
241 country, the information is of a very general kind; I have nowhere
224 been able to check in any detail on my own observations. F. and W. Jaspert recognize that Umbundu culture is primarily based on agriculture, maize being the most important crop, but they do not admit the importance of hunting (p. 16).

I saw many successful parties of Unbundu hunters, tested their precision with the bow and arrow, and was able to record the ritual connected with the initiation of a professional hunter. There is also a ceremony before the hunter sets out. It would be more accurate to say that, although Umbundu culture is based primarily on agriculture, hunting still retains some of its earlier importance.

114 The diagrams of houses in different parts of Angola are a useful feature of the work. I made many photographs but did not record details of planning.

114 The masks I obtained are exactly like those pictured, but my
881 observations were carried out a long way to the southeast of the point where the Jasperts touched the Vachokue culture. I do not understand from their description whether the writers saw an initiation ceremony. They state that boys are circumcised and girls are excised when very young, even at the age of five or six years. I observed initiation camps and dances at three centers, Ngalangi, Katoko, and Cangamba; the last named is the main center of Vachokue culture. The male novices varied in age from twelve to sixteen years hence they were older than the novices mentioned by the Jasperts. I was informed that there were no excision operations for girls, though at Ngalangi, Vanyemba girls were secluded in the bush during initiation rites lasting for a month.

Bibliographical references to the research of H. Baumann will be found useful for comparative study. His detailed record of initiation among the Vachokue is valuable as a check on my observation, as we worked independently in areas separated by several hundred miles.

Consultation of historical sources gives the following answers to questions which were asked as an introduction to this chapter.

174 On the grounds of tribal tradition, historical evidence, and cultural affinities, the original home of the Ovimbundu was likely to have been in the southwest Congo. The Oyimbundu undoubtedly possess important cultural traits that have been characteristic of the southern Congo region from the earliest time for which a record exists.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

In northern Angola the Ovimbundu could not have had other than a warlike existence, which trained them in military tactics and the building up of an aggressive confederacy. In this they were aided by contact with the Portuguese, who supplied guns and powder in exchange for slaves and ivory from the interior. This accumulated wealth further stimulated the building up of Umbundu tribal life.

Introduction of maize by the Portuguese gave the Ovimbundu a knowledge of this grain, which later became their staple wealth and food supply.

The cultural pattern of the northern Congo was the same in the year 1600 as it is today, and consideration of the ethnology of the Congo region reveals numerous similarities with Umbundu culture of the present time.

Writings of explorers in Angola from A.D. 1800 to the present day bring out many points which are in agreement with my field observations. There are no discrepancies which would make me question the validity of information given by my informants.

In early records, Battell's observation of cattle in the hinterland of Benguela (1600), is important in showing that at such an early date the Ovimbundu had access to cattle when raiding from their home in the Benguela Highlands.

From these fundamentals of geography and history the inquiry turns to a detailed account of my observations among the Ovimbundu and surrounding tribes.

3 Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The cow's tail is used
237 as a sheath for covering the iron shafts of assagais, and it is sometimes made into a switch which the rain-maker uses during his performances.

233 Bulls are castrated when two years old. The wound is rubbed
[232] with ashes, salt, soot, and palm oil. Bullocks are used for riding, also
[492] for pull-carts introduced by the Boers. The herd obtains most of its food by grazing. In the dry season grass withers, with the result that the animals become thin and stall-feeding is necessary. In former days cattle-raiding was a practice of the Ovimbundu, who
233 robbed the Vacilenge. It is certain that the Ovimbundu did not own
174 cattle when they entered Angola. If the general tradition is correct the Ovimbundu came into Angola from a northeasterly direction, from the borders of the Belgian Congo as it is called today; this is not a cattle-raising region.

The Ovimbundu of Elende have a joke against the people of Bailundu, because the latter on first seeing a cow offered the animal some food on a wooden platter. This story suggests that the Bailundu people, who are of the Ovimbundu confederacy, did not know the animal and its habits as early as did the Ovimbundu themselves.

233 Although the Ovimbundu do not usually kill their cattle they may do so in the months of June and July, because at this time pasture is withered and food is scarce. Animals which are diseased, aged, or injured, are killed and eaten.

231 The native pig is distinguishable from European breeds by its long thin snout and slender development. This breed is said by the Director of Animal Husbandry, Humpata, to be the Keltic breed (Plate LV). There is, he says, no evidence to prove that the
[176] Ovimbundu have at any time domesticated pigs from the wild hogs which are to be found in Angola. There is no family which does not own a pig, and on the whole the pig fares much better than the sheep or the goat. The pig receives water and a daily ration of food, which is usually sweet potatoes and their leaves, together with some
232 corn. Male pigs are castrated at any time between the ages of six
[463] months and one year by an operator who is a paid specialist. The fee for castrating a bull is four yards of cloth, but a small gift is considered sufficient reward for performing the operation on a pig.
[282] If a pig is thin, the leather is said to be of good quality and therefore
252 suitable for making sheaths for knives. Usually the flesh of the pig is eaten shortly after the animal has been killed, but the meat of the bullock, on the contrary, is sometimes dried over a fire and preserved. But this is not a general practice as the animals are too valuable to be slaughtered.

X. CULTURE CONTACTS

174 The foregoing chapters have presented the main outlines of the tribal life of the Ovimbundu, with a brief reference to some factors in the cultures of Angolan tribes with whom the Ovimbundu are in close contact. But hitherto no attempt has been made to analyze the cultural contacts of the Ovimbundu outside Angola.

The data recorded indicate that the tribal life of the Ovimbundu is not an independent growth in the Benguela Highlands. We have, therefore, a problem involving a detailed study of surrounding cultures. The most important of these are located in the Congo basin, Rhodesia, and South West Africa, and for this reason the present chapter is divided into three sections, each of which deals with one of these areas which are all contiguous to Angola.

[121] In analyzing these surrounding cultures for comparison with the tribal life of the Ovimbundu, the social patterns as a whole are considered, and no attempt is made to construct a theory of derivations based on what might be a few fortuitous resemblances arising through convergence. Our study is aided by a knowledge of historical contacts and geographical contiguity of the areas compared. Therefore the method is not open to the objections that have been made justly against an assumption of cultural relationships between two widely separated regions, in which only a few artifacts or institutions have an alleged resemblance.

Chapters X and XI are concerned with discussing the probable cultural relationships of the Ovimbundu, and a final chapter, "Cultural Processes," indicates the way in which historical events and geographical factors have contributed to the selection and welding of traits whose aggregate now constitutes the tribal life of the Ovimbundu.

Congo Basin

An examination of the cultural traits of the Congo basin is of particular importance, because of the known historical connection of the Ovimbundu with Congo tribes, before the former entered the Benguela Highlands. Such a survey is conveniently made by examining the culture of the Congo basin from the estuary along the course of the main river, then southward along the Kasai and its tributaries into the northeast of Angola.

Despite minor differences the Congo area may be regarded as a region of considerable uniformity with regard to environment and

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

cultural factors. The transitions from the Congo basin to the Benguela Highlands are of a gradual kind with respect to climatic conditions, physical features, and culture. Therefore, there are no compelling conditions which caused the Ovimbundu suddenly to abandon traits already acquired before their southern migration. 174

Nevertheless, several traits of Congo culture which must have been known to the Ovimbundu have disappeared from their tribal life, while other factors have been emphasized in importance because of a change in locality. The disappearance of traits and the welding of others is discussed in chapter XII. The present section is concerned with summarizing the points of resemblance and difference between the Congo culture and that of the Ovimbundu.

The books of J. J. Monteiro mention several traits which are a link between cultures of the Congo and the Ovimbundu culture of the Benguela Highlands. The Mushicongos chip all their teeth to fine points (vol. I, p. 262), a practice which resembles that of the Umbundu-speaking Vasele. Monteiro describes the musical bow, the friction drum, and the rubbing of a grooved piece of wood with a stick (vol. I, pp. 139–141). All these musical devices are used today by the Ovimbundu far to the south of the areas described by this writer. When describing the Esele country which forms a cultural pocket of the Ovimbundu people, I have previously referred to Monteiro's mention of the extinguishing of old fires and the ceremonial creation of new ones at the death of a king (vol. II, p. 167); also the functioning of the poison ordeal with use of the bark of *Erythrophlaeum guineense* (vol. I, p. 61). The former of these customs is carefully observed by the Ovimbundu at the present time, while the latter is practised furtively. 171

A part of Angola that is frequently omitted is the Cabinda Enclave to the north of the Congo estuary. Overbergh describes this territory in "Les Mayombe"; the Mayombe are a forest people living near Boma. They use red *tukula* wood for bodily ornament. There are special names for the first- and second-born of twins (p. 217). Circumcision is practised (p. 233). The poison ordeal is used with the drug Kasa. There is a classificatory system of relationships (p. 259), but without sufficient detail for comparison with that of the Ovimbundu. The most artistic figurines, which are carved in wood or ivory, are sometimes filled with a mixture of clay and blood as "medicine" (p. 219). The Mayombe believe in the existence of a supreme being named Ngambi but they have no cult for him; there is, however, a very active belief in a world

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

171 region. Plate XVI, fig. 284, shows long wooden flutes like those of Umbundu pattern at Bailundu. Plate XIX, figs. 124 and 313, indicates that the musical bow with its gourd resonator is of the form used by the Ovimbundu.

The ethnographical catalogue of the Rijks Museum of Leiden shows many objects of the southwest Congo which are identical with those used by the Ovimbundu. Plate 193 pictures the sansa and the marimba which are common to both regions. Plates 224, fig. 1, and 225, fig. 1, show tobacco-pipes and a mancala board of Ngalangi pattern. The mancala board from the Sankuru region has twenty-eight holes arranged seven by four. Plates 75, fig. 10, and 236, fig. 4, indicate that curved knives used by the Bangala are like those used by the Vasele of northeast Angola. Plate 227, fig. 2, shows that head-dresses for initiates closely resemble those worn by Vachokue boys at Cangamba, eastern Angola.

174 This examination of the traits of Congo culture calls attention to numerous resemblances between the cultural pattern of the Congo region and that of the Ovimbundu of the present day. I think there is reason to accept the following factors of Umbundu life as a part of the Congo culture before the separation of the Umbundu-speaking peoples. The historical and geographical facts when considered in relation to the number of cultural identities fully support the thesis that the Ovimbundu are of the central African matrix of cultures.

On the material side resemblances are close, as the following summary will show. The Ovimbundu cultivate maize from which beer is made; they have manioc, peanuts, yams, sweet potatoes, and beans. Methods of agriculture and preparation of foods are similar. The animals common to both regions are the sheep, goat, chicken, and dog. The difference is the rearing of cattle by the Ovimbundu, who have also concentrated on the cultivation of maize to an extent not possible in the more densely wooded areas of the Congo basin. The use of dogs' flesh as food is common in both areas.

The musical instruments of the Ovimbundu are in keeping with Congo patterns in every way. Indeed, there exist few and only minor differences. Forms common to both areas are the *ocisanji*, a flat board with two rows of metal keys; dumb-bell basket rattles and gourd rattles; the friction drum; the marimba; wooden flutes; the flat drum *ocingufu*; the double iron gong; and the long tubular drum which is held between the performer's legs. Resemblances

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

of a definite kind are found in the game with rolling tubers; the use of red *tukula* wood for decorating the body; the insertion of burned rubber into scarifications; the gourd water-pipe for smoking tobacco and hemp; the dugout canoe; conical fishing baskets; and the use of narcotic poisons for fish. The wood-carving of the Ovimbundu is related not only in general style but in detail to that of the south-west Congo.

Close resemblances in points of social organization and religious belief exist, but some of these identities are common not merely to tribes of the Congo basin and the Benguela Highlands; they form traits of a wider cultural basis, as will be shown.

These resemblances have great weight in establishing relationship between a parent culture and the offshoot, because we are dealing with a large number of allied factors that have been welded into cultural patterns; the comparison does not depend on a few isolated resemblances of form. A point of identity in spiritual belief is the recognition of a supreme being, Suku, Nzambi, or Kalunga, a creator who is too far away to be concerned with the affairs of men. To him no sacrifice or appeal is made, since all attention is reserved for the ancestral spirits whose cult is connected with the use of wooden figurines, which are of similar pattern in the Congo basin and the Benguela Highlands.

The soul is said to reside in the heart, and the words used for soul are almost the same. There are houses for sacred objects once the property of men of importance. Distinction is usually made between the *nganga*, a practitioner of witchcraft of an antisocial kind, and the legitimate medicine-man. Both cultures have the rain-maker. *Ekandu* is a word describing any action contrary to the moral standards.

As a social factor there is the men's house where only males congregate for the evening meal brought by their women, and here the communal pipe is passed round. Government is the same, by kings of great power who delegate local affairs to village chiefs. The social structure of the Ovimbundu rested formerly on a system of alliances, warfare, and slavery similar to that of the Congo. A classificatory system of relationships and descent of property, not to a wife and children but to the maternal uncle or to children of the deceased man's sister, is similar for tribes of the Congo and the Ovimbundu.

The prenuptial relationship of boys and girls, freedom of choice in marriage, and the giving of marriage tokens are of the same

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

174 pattern. In principle, the puberty rites for boys and girls of eastern Angola are the same as those of the Congo region, and masks of eastern Angola resemble those used by the Bapindi of the southwest Congo. Cannibalism was a factor common to the Congo basin and the territory occupied by the Ovimbundu, who have practised ceremonial cannibalism within the memory of persons still alive.

The foregoing summary, supported by preceding details, makes clear that a substantial part of Umbundu culture is definitely like that of the Congo basin. There can be no objection to the evidence as a possibly fortuitous series of vague resemblances, since the entire backgrounds are of the same pattern. The Ovimbundu have a tribal life which is demonstrably a part of the matrix from which, on historical grounds, it is thought to have been derived. The loss of elements, the stressing of others, and the welding of traits from different sources, are matters for discussion in a final chapter dealing with the processes of cultural growth.

RHODESIA

439 177 A constant factor in the economic and cultural development of the Ovimbundu has been the caravan trade from Bihé and Bailundu northeastward across Africa to the Great Lakes, and southward across Moxico into the Zambezi valley and Rhodesia. Every traveler from Battell (1600) onward mentions these caravans which returned to the Benguela Highlands with slaves and ivory. The traditions of journeys still live. Umbundu words are used to describe the Great Lakes, and I have mentioned a wooden figure used for consultation by the medicine-man at a division of routes. There are even today a few large caravans.

The first regular slave traders into northern Rhodesia were the Mbundus from Angola. The Lambas say they were peaceful traders who brought calico, guns, and beads to trade for ivory and slaves. The Mbundu traders were often treated treacherously by both the Lambas and the Lenjes. In some cases they were robbed by the Lamba chiefs. It is said that the Lenjes used to bring their own children to the Mbundu traders in order to buy calico and powder. In the evening the Lenjes used the newly acquired guns to attack the Mbundu traders so that they might recover the children who had been traded (C. M. Doke, p. 79).

The account of F. S. Arnot is a valuable record of a journey which brought him into touch with these traders' caravans, whose route he followed into Garenganze, a country to the southwest of

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

(vol. II, p. 265), which is an instrument of the Ovimbundu and several tribes of the southwest Congo. The marimba, made from eight slats of wood with gourds underneath, is well known in the north and east of Angola. /171

There is real similarity both in form and function between the culture of Rhodesia and that of the Ovimbundu. This assertion does not rest on consideration of a few factors of a general kind. In addition to the weight of evidence afforded by the long list of similar factors detailed in this section, one must bear in mind the geographical proximity and the known historical connection of the areas under discussion. The following points are of primary importance in accounting for the similarity of culture patterns in Rhodesia and the highlands of Angola occupied by the Ovimbundu. /174

(1) Central Angola and Rhodesia have so many traits in common with each other and with the southwest Congo culture that together the three form a cultural harmony.

(2) Central Angola and Rhodesia have both derived factors from the cattle culture of east Africa, though by different routes.

(3) Rhodesia and central Angola have had prolonged direct contacts through caravan trade carried on by the Ovimbundu.

(4) In addition to diffusion there has been a convergence of cultures in Rhodesia and central Angola because of similarity of geographical conditions. Both are high plateau regions having a degree of heat and a rainfall suitable for the growth of maize and the rearing of cattle. Therefore these occupations have developed in both regions because in each locality there has been a need, favorable conditions, and a like response to physical conditions.

SOUTH WEST AFRICA

The principal tribes of this area are the Ovambo, Herero, Berg Damara, Nama Hottentots, and Bushmen. The most important tribes to consider from the cultural point of view are the Ovambo and the Herero. Wandering bands of Bushmen occur in Angola, and here and there may be seen among the Ovimbundu individuals who appear to have a trace of Bushman blood; but comparison of collections and notes relating to the Ovimbundu with literature on Bushman tribes does not reveal any similarities. There has undeniably been some contact of Bushmen with the inhabitants of Angola, but Bushman influence has probably been very slight from a cultural and physical point of view (D. Bleek; S. Marquardsen, p. 109). /177

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Angola as the source of supply for the Ovimbundu, who both traded and made warfare with the south.

Therefore, reasonable ground exists for believing that the cultural traits that the Ovimbundu associate with the keeping of cattle have been taken over with the cattle themselves. The traits agree in principle and detail with the factors of the African cattle-keeping areas. The characteristics of this pastoral culture have been outlined by M. J. Herskovits (The Cattle Complex in East Africa, *Amer. Anth.*, XXVIII, 1926, pp. 270–272; 424–528; 630–664). I wish, however, to give prominence to the factor of sacred fire which is fundamental in the cattle-keeping culture. The importance of sacred fire in the ritual of the Ovimbundu has been demonstrated, and this trait is a most important link between the typically Negro culture of the Ovimbundu and the Hamitic pastoral culture of east Africa.

A brief summary of the salient facts of the cattle-keeping culture, such as is found in east and south Africa, will be given. This will be followed by a statement of the cultural traits associated with the keeping of cattle among the Ovimbundu in order to demonstrate similarities of custom.

In describing cattle-keeping people of the Lakes region J. Roscoe (VI) outlines a pre-pastoral condition characterized by agricultural pursuits which still survive near Ruwenzori and Elgon. Of the pastoral people the most conservative are the Banyankole of Ankole, among whom all social customs fall into line with the keeping of cattle. Milk is the principal food, and strong purgatives are taken after eating vegetable food, which is regarded as unclean. Agriculturists are a serf class who are not allowed to have milk. A woman of the pastoral class would not accept a husband from the agricultural people, because they are social inferiors. In such a community one finds a strict preservation of customs centering in cattle. Bulls are killed beside the grave of a chief, while cows are dedicated to the dead chief at whose shrine their milk is offered daily (p. 21).

Roscoe's account of the worship of the dead in Uganda (III) further explains customs that are characteristic of pastoral communities in which the connection between cattle-keeping and kingship is important. The death of the king is not announced and the fact of death is kept secret for several days until preparations for the succession have been made. "The fire is extinct" is a euphemism which refers to the death of the king. The king is buried in a hut surrounded by a fence. This hut is later visited by the new king

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

233 174 who cleans and decorates the jawbone of his predecessor, then preserves it in a case of lion skin. Among the Basoga the skull of the king is cleaned and stitched in cowhide. It is then placed in a temple where a medium lives in order to converse with the ghost of the king (p. 43). The Bunyoro line the grave of a king with cowhide, and the slaughtered cows are said to serve the dead king with milk in a spirit world.

Roscoe (I, p. 101) states that the Bahima wrap the body of a king in the skin of a freshly killed cow; the deities are not often invoked, but attention is paid to ancestral ghosts (p. 109). There is a Bahima custom of making blood brotherhood by drinking blood mixed with milk (p. 117). The Banyankole (Roscoe, V, p. 32), institute a blood brotherhood by rubbing each other with blood drawn from their navels by an arrow. The body of a king is sewn in cowhide (p. 58). A cow is killed and eaten at the grave of a chief (p. 146).

171 A further examination of Roscoe's observations (IV) adds corroborative information. The Bakitara have rain-makers for each district (p. 28). There is a ritual for establishing blood brotherhood (p. 46). At the king's death all fires in the royal enclosure are extinguished; so also are the fires in each royal cow kraal. Fresh fires are made by friction in the new royal enclosure from which fire is distributed to the kraals (p. 47). The Bakitara test two litigants or accused persons by asking each to provide chickens which are made to take poison (p. 70). The death of the king is not announced for some days; he is said to be asleep. A young bull is killed to provide a shroud for the king's body (p. 121). The king's spear and walking stick are kept in the tomb (p. 126). At the death of a king of the Baganda the guardian of the king's sacred fire is strangled. A war leader rubs himself with ashes from the sacred fire in order to increase his strength and courage (Roscoe, II, pp. 103, 349).

The concept of the sacred fire has spread, not only down the east side of Africa and into Angola, but northeastward to the Lotuko-speaking peoples. Here a new fire has to be kindled at the initiation of a member of the drum-house. At puberal initiation ceremonies for boys, the rain-maker creates new fire with twirling sticks, which are never again used, though they are preserved. All fires in the village are extinguished before the new fires are made. The freshly ignited fire is distributed first to drum-houses then to the homes (C. G. and B. Z. Seligman, Sudan Notes and Records, VIII, pp. 12,

3: Hambly · E-6 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

15). Fire is kindled on the grave and tended by a relative for thirty days (p. 38). |71|

When the Masai desire rain, a fire of cordia wood is lighted. Into this a medicine-man throws charms, after which several medicine-men dance round the fire and sing (A. C. Hollis, The Masai, p. 348).

Bösch states that the Banyamwezi have a fire-making rite which is symbolic and religious, "mais avant tout il est magique." The new fire is made annually at the brewing of the first beer. New fire is made when epidemics of sickness occur, also at the inauguration of a new chief. The Ovimbundu make and distribute new fire on each of these occasions. The Banyamwezi strangle their decrepit king but do not announce the death. A report stating that the king is sick is issued (Les Banyamwezi, pp. 229–233).

The usages of the cattle-keeping Ovambo (of whom the Vakuanyama of southern Angola are a section) and the Herero, are of paramount importance in this research because of their proximity to the Ovimbundu.

H. Vedder (III, p. 156) has come to the conclusion that the Herero represent the southern extremity of a racial migration from the region of the Great Lakes, and this is the generally accepted view. Vedder states that the Herero came through the south of Angola, crossed the Cunene River, and entered the Kaokoveld (p. 166). From a study of native traditions, philology, and cultural elements, there is reason for supposing that the Ovambo, including the Vakuanyama, extended farther into Angola than they do today; hence contacts with the Ovimbundu were probably frequent, and possibly continuous for a period. |174| |114|

C. H. L. Hahn has recently made an analysis of the traits of Kuanyama culture. His introductory pages give an account of Kalunga, a supreme being whose name is coupled with the name Nangombe. There is here a philological resemblance to words used by the Ovimbundu. *Kalunga* is an Umbundu word meaning "greetings," "sea," "lord," and "death," the meaning varying with the context and accent. *Ongombe* is the Umbundu word for ox, while *Kangombe* is the name of more than one chief of historical importance. The Herero respect a supreme being whom they call Ndjambi Karunga. *Nyambi* is a well-known word in the Congo region, and the Ovimbundu have the word *Njambi*, or *Na-Njambi*, which means "Lord Njambi."

174 114 The Ovambo will not allow the tribal fire of the chief's kraal to burn out because it is the life of the people (Hahn, p. 3). This author writes in the past tense, from which one infers that the customs he describes have declined. Two old men were the keepers of the sacred fire; these guardians were chosen from the circumcised men (p. 17). The fire was never allowed to flare, but only to smolder. No one referred to this fire, nor was anyone allowed to sit near it, cook over it, or warm himself. The whole tribe received the fire from the chief, who originally gave it to the headman for distribution to commoners (p. 18). Hahn remarks that, although these customs are declining, they are still observed by the Vakuanyama, the branch of the Ovambo which is in closest contact with the Ovimbundu.

171 In the same publication (III, p. 68) Vedder says of the Berg Damara that a series of religious ideas centers in the holy fire which burns perpetually on the eastern side of a sacred tree in the middle of each village. At this fire the elders cook their meat, and here the council meeting is held. In order to obtain a seat at the holy fire a young man has to submit to initiation as a hunter on three occasions, at intervals of a year. Children may not play at the holy fire. When hunting becomes unprofitable the Berg Damara move to a new site, and a glowing piece of wood is taken from the sacred fire in order to kindle a new one. This is the practice described in connection with the formation of a new village site by the Ovimbundu. A more detailed account of sacred fire is given by Vedder (II, pp. 23–27).

L. Fourie, another contributor to "Native Tribes of Southwest Africa," shows that the Heikom Bushmen have a sacred fire kindled and owned by the headman, who is the only person who knows how to bring from this fire the properties which induce health and well-being. When making a new settlement the headman kindles the new fire under the sacred tree, and fire from the old camp may not be used. After the headman has dropped herbs into the fire and has lighted his pipe therefrom, his wife takes brands for kindling the fire in her hut. The fire is then distributed from this point among the whole group (p. 87).

The center for religious worship among the Herero is an ash heap in which a weak fire glimmers. This is blown into a blaze only on festive occasions. The fire is always situated between the chief kraal and the house of the principal wife. Round the fire lie horns of cattle which have been slaughtered as an offering (Vedder, III, p. 167). The holy fire is a gift from Mukuru, and extinction of

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

the fire means disaster for the tribe. If the fire should die out, only the priest as living representative of Mukuru may rekindle it. The relighting is done by means of fire-sticks, which are said to be male and female. A traveler makes sure of the blessing of his ancestors by taking a firebrand from the holy fire with him. When laying the foundation of a new house the builder must obtain a firebrand from the fire of a recognized priest-chief. 171

To corroborate the information given by Vedder, one may turn to the work of J. Irle (II, pp. 337, 342, 346). The soul, which is not corporeal, is identified with the heart as among the Ovimbundu and in the southwest Congo. The Herero use sandals which they bury with the dead. Probably the Ovimbundu have borrowed the idea of sandals from this southern culture, since there are no sandal-wearing people found on any other side of them. The Herero speak of Ndjambi, and Irle asks, "Who is Ndjambi, with whom they so frequently associated the name Karunga?" They say that Karunga is Ndjambi who sends rain, thunder, and lightning. The Herero say, "Karunga dwells in heaven. He does us only good, therefore we do not fear him and do not sacrifice to him." Holy fire, which is never allowed to go out, is made with fire-sticks in the ancestor house.

A. W. Hoernlé has commented on the use of sacred fire by the Hottentots. *Nau* is a mystic force; for example, an animal killed by lightning is *nau*. As soon as a person becomes *nau*, the fire in his hut is *nau* and must no longer be used for cooking. A fire kindled with the fire-sticks is used for the purification ceremony of a girl who menstruates for the first time. After the ceremony she may resume her milking duties. The Hottentots use the sweat bath as a means of purifying mourners. An article entitled "The Sacred Fire of the Bapedi of the Transvaal," by W. M. Eiselen, adds important data to the notes given here.

All this evidence from east and southwest Africa is in close agreement with personal observations among the Ovimbundu. The contacts of the Ovimbundu with southern Angola are established facts, hence history and geography render the hypothesis of a derivation of culture probable. The Ovimbundu regard cattle as an estimate of weath and social standing. Usually the animals are not killed or milked, but they are used to pay fines, and to make purchases. 174

In dealing with kingship among the Ovimbundu I note a strong resemblance to customs prevailing near Victoria Nyanza, the

174 principal focus of the cattle-keeping areas. The king's death is not announced by the Ovimbundu. There is a special hut for burial, and part of the head is later removed for decoration and separate interment. This part of the royal corpse is subsequently brought out for worship and supplication. The Ovimbundu never admit the death of a king until a successor has been chosen. The king's body is buried in oxhide, but the head is severed by suspending the corpse with a rope round the neck, then twisting the body. The head is sewn in oxhide and kept in a box. In time of drought or before a journey a chief or medicine-man visits the head to make a sacrifice and ask for help. Oxen are killed at funeral feasts of the wealthy and the horns are mounted over the grave. Mourners for the king wear strips of oxhide round their wrists.

There can be no doubt that the Ovimbundu received the above traits, also their knowledge and use of the sacred fire, from the cattle-keeping area. The use of sacred fire has been shown to be a primary trait associated with the keeping of cattle. Reference to field work among the Ovimbundu indicates that the usages connected with sacred fire agree in detail with those of the pastoral area. The Ovimbundu keep the sacred fire burning in the burial place of kings; for instance at Ngalangi, as described. The Ovimbundu create new fire by twirling when a new village site is opened, and the fire is distributed from the chief's home. Lustration after an epidemic of sickness is always ceremonially carried out by creation of new fire on which the blood of sacrificed animals is sprinkled. Therefore, in general outline and considerable detail the factors associated with cattle-keeping among the Ovimbundu are those of the pastoral areas of east, south, and southwest Africa.

In summarizing we may say that contacts of the Ovimbundu with southwest Africa have arisen from occupation of contiguous territory, along with trading and raiding. The acquisitions made by the Ovimbundu from pastoral tribes include several artifacts such as sandals, the assagai, and the throwing club. More important than the diffusion of these objects into Umbundu culture has been the reception of the cattle themselves, along with the social values, usages, and religious beliefs which are the usual concomitants of the African pastoral culture.

174 181 A study of the culture contacts of the Ovimbundu conclusively shows that they are not an isolated people whose artifacts, religious beliefs, and social life stand out distinctively from the culture patterns around them. On the contrary the Ovimbundu have,

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1954 FP13 Mbundu FP13

through trade and warfare, been an absorbent people, reaching out in all directions and assimilating all cultural traits which were of service. 174 181

Up to this point, only the immediate culture contacts of the Ovimbundu have been considered. Yet it is evident that some of the cultural traits which have been discussed are widely diffused in Africa. Consequently, some further inquiry is needed if the tribal life of the Ovimbundu is to be considered against a broad ethnological background of African culture.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

171 428 this method is characteristic of many pastoral tribes of south and east Africa.

171 611 The Ovimbundu are situated between two systems of reckoning descent, succession, and inheritance; namely, the Negro system of the Congo region, and that of the eastern and southern cattle-keeping people. In view of the culture contacts described in Chapter X, the mixed system of the Ovimbundu is intelligible.

On the one hand the Ovimbundu emphasize the rights of the mother's brother while denying inheritance to a wife and her children, but in royal families the eldest son of the principal wife succeeds to kingship. Among commoners descent is reckoned through both the father and the mother. Therefore the inference is that the [174] Ovimbundu have, by virtue of their position and contacts, made a blending of two distinct social systems, one of which gives succession to office in the male line, while the other gives inheritance in the female line. In their system of burial rites for kings the Ovimbundu follow the usages of the pastoral area.

171 608 Exchange of blood is an Umbundu custom resembling that which occurs widely in Negro Africa. This exchange of blood is the typical Negro form of the blood brotherhood. Another rite is the Hamitic custom of drinking a mixture of blood and milk; this the Ovimbundu do not practise.

171 241 The hoe-cultivation practised by Ovimbundu women is in agreement with Baumann's association of hoe-culture and matriarchal conditions, the latter being indicated by the importance of the mother's brother. These concomitant factors are shown by Baumann (II, p. 292) to be characteristic of a wide area in the Congo basin. To this area may be added the whole of central Angola.

171 567 The factors of slavery among the Ovimbundu are in agreement with all that is known of the treatment of slaves in the Congo area and farther west Africa. Slaves of the Ovimbundu taken in warfare were treated with less consideration than those who passed into slavery to redeem a debt. There was also discrimination in favor of slaves taken in local quarrels among the Ovimbundu themselves. The killing and eating of slaves in north Angola is a custom whose early occurrence has already been noted.

AFRICAN PUBERTY RITES

171 881 Initiation ceremonies for boys and girls are at present well preserved among the Vachokue of eastern Angola; for a period such ceremonies declined among the Ovimbundu, but there is now a

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

recrudescence. Masks of eastern Angola most closely resemble those of the Bapindi of the southwest Congo, but the general background of these puberty rites is comparable in Angola, parts of the Congo, and in several parts of the forest belt of west Africa from Sierra Leone to Cameroon.

Usually there is seclusion, hardship, training in dances and tribal customs, with ceremonial reappearance and change of name. Evidently the Ovimbundu share the material traits and the psychological background of initiatory rites with a very large number of tribes, which occupy the forest zones of west and central Africa.

G. Lindblom's publication, "The Use of Stilts in Africa and America," helps to explain the occurrence of stilt-walking at the final ceremonies of initiation witnessed at Cangamba. Since stilt-walking in Angola occurs chiefly in the eastern section, perhaps one should link the trait with the stilt-walking in Nyasaland, because there has been continuous communication from Angola to Nyasaland along the Zambezi valley. The stilt-walking of eastern Angola may, however, be a cultural offshoot from the southwest Congo, for according to Lindblom the stilt-walking trait occurs there, and the contacts of eastern Angola with the southwest Congo have been important.

In turning from these factors of social life to traits of a more material kind, there are points of importance to be noted in connection with food supply and industries. A possibility exists that such traits as hunting, use of certain types of musical instruments, basketry, and pottery, will indicate that the Ovimbundu, before their separation, drew some of their fundamental traits from a widely distributed matrix.

HUNTING APPLIANCES OF AFRICA

L. S. B. Leakey (A New Classification of the Bow and Arrow in Africa, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, pp. 259–294) has dealt with the distribution of bows and arrows. Leakey states that, owing to lack of evidence, he was unable to describe the bows and arrows of Angola. I have therefore illustrated these in detail (Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9).

Some of the arrowheads used by the Ovimbundu resemble those of the Bashilele in the southwest Congo, but on the whole arrowheads used in Angola are of distinctive patterns, and presumably they represent a special local development. The round bow of the Ovimbundu and the Vachokue is like that of the southern Congo, and it is absolutely distinct from the short flat bow used in southern Angola among the Vakuanyama.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

171 organization and artifacts have been described in relation to a wide cultural background in Negro Africa. There remains, however, the more difficult problem of a possible introduction of some of these cultural traits from regions outside the continent of Africa itself.

KULTURKREIS THEORY

174 114 Our investigation is able to account for the occurrence of certain widely distributed traits which the Ovimbundu possess, either in their common form or in some specialized aspect. The broader problem of the possible origin of African traits in Melanesia and Indonesia is one that should not be neglected.

The kulturkreis theory as expounded by Graebner (Methode der Ethnologie, Heidelberg, 1911) has been applied to Africa by B. Ankermann (*Zeitsch. Ethn.*, 1905, pp. 62–90). Frobenius has expressed his views in "Der Ursprung der afrikanischen Kulturen," Leipzig, 1894; "Das unbekannte Afrika," Munich, 1923; and the "Atlas afrikanus," Munich, 1922.

An article of Frobenius (Smithsonian Institution Reports, 1898, pp. 638–647) summarizes the Graebnerian thesis so far as Africa is concerned. Frobenius says that the Malayo-Negritan relationship of African culture is established. Certain cultural elements appear together and are equally distributed. Ethnographical objects illustrative of phases of culture may be examined with a view to fixing their descent, just as we examine the limbs and organs of a living being, and the theory is concerned with morphological considerations in particular.

Frobenius states (p. 639), that he is concerned with studying the genealogical tree of culture forms, and as a first example he chooses wooden drums which are found in the Congo basin and lower Guinea; these drums are said to be of Malayo-Negritan origin. The next example chosen is that of the Malayo-Negritan bow. Wooden shields of Africa with reed covering have related forms in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Pile dwellings are found in Dahomey and among the Ambuella; also in New Guinea. Chairs and neck rests used by many Negro tribes are of Oceanic form. There is a Malayo-Negritan affinity of bark fabrics of Africa with the well-known tapa cloth of Oceania (p. 644). The "likeness of anatomical origin, coupled with the outlined area of distribution, is evidence not to be gainsaid" (p. 645). The culture of a fishing community is on all sides characterized by mesh work. In New Guinea the net is used as clothing, and in the whole of west Africa we

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

hear of the netted jerseys of the disguised. The matriarchate is possibly to be classed among Malayo-Negritan characteristics, in particular when accompanied by exogamy. So runs the Graebnerian argument.

To these cultural factors from Melanesia Frobenius adds the gora, which he compares with a form from New Pommern. He also mentions the marimba; tobacco-pipes of the Ituri region, which are likened to those of New Guinea; and the scarification of the Bashilange, which has some circular characters said to be like Maori moko. The prows of canoes in Dualla (Cameroon) are compared with those of the Admiralty Islands.

The factors of Asiatic culture which have affected northern Africa are more readily accepted because of known historical contacts of a continuous kind over geographically contiguous regions. Probably Frobenius is right in attributing the drum with a pottery base, chain armor, quilted armor, the long knife, and the stringed instrument *rababa*, to Asiatic sources. The round shields of northeast Africa may be accepted as of Asiatic origin. These points, though part of the general theory, do not concern our study of the Ovimbundu, who do not possess these alleged Asiatic traits.

The supposed line of migration of Malayo-Negritan culture up the Zambezi valley, thence along the Sankuru into the Congo basin and so to Cameroon and fartner west Africa, presents no great obstacle, but the hypothesis lacks a coordination of cultural elements and a historico-psychological explanation.

In considering several Indonesian factors such as those mentioned by R. Linton as occurring in Madagascar (*Amer. Anth.*, 1928, pp. 372–389), and while regarding the evidence of J. Hornell (*Man*, 1928. No. 1) respecting the similarity of canoes on Lake Victoria Nyanza and along the coast with those from Java, there is no difficulty in admitting impacts from Indonesia. There is, however, only the beginning of a hypothesis in these comparisons.

The construction of a theory purporting to show phylogenetic connection between cultures as remote as those of Sierra Leone and Melanesia still requires elaboration. At the present time there is not sufficient detail available for the filling in of distribution maps purporting to show the line of migration of this postulated Malayo-Negritan culture. But according to Graebnerian views a hiatus merely means that the intrusive culture has disappeared.

The question arises respecting evidence from Angola which may favor or refute the validity of a Malayo-Negritan origin of some

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

174 culture elements of Negro Africa. Among the cultural traits of
114 the Ovimbundu are a few which the Graebnerians would claim as evidence of the passage of Indonesian cultural waves. Use of the bow is part of the bow culture. Matriarchal conditions and hoe-culture by women would be regarded as a somewhat later wave of culture. Frobenius would ascribe the use of netted clothing during initiation to an Oceanic origin. There is a small area in southeast Angola where pile dwellings are built by the Ambuella tribe. Bark cloth is made in eastern Angola. The marimba and the musical bow are traits of Umbundu and Oceanic culture.

The point at issue seems to be the acceptance or rejection of cultural contacts on the ground of alleged resemblance in forms. Frobenius would doubtless add that the supposed Malayo-Negritan factors in Umbundu culture lie only a little to the southwest of the Zambezi, which is a main line of hypothetical migration of Malayo-Negritan factors.

Each of these elements of Umbundu culture is of a non-specific kind. For example, there is nothing about the bark cloth, except that it is a bark cloth, to link it with similar material in any other part of the world. Stripping the tree, soaking the bark and beating it, are part of the general technique.

The musical bow has a wide distribution, as H. Balfour (I) has shown. He studies the distribution in Africa, North and South America, Asia, India, the Malay Archipelago, Melanesia, and Polynesia. He postulates the derivation from the archers' bow and says (p. 85), "The question whether or no we are to regard the musical bows in India and in Africa as belonging to one family, is one which is difficult to answer." Balfour is impressed with similarity of forms in India and Africa, but feels that the common origin is not demonstrable.

When comparing types of masks and costumes within the African continent itself the work of Frobenius (I) is found to be useful in indicating areas over which certain types of regalia are used in initiation ceremonies. There is undoubtedly a localization of types, and we previously noted that Angolan forms of masks and costumes are definitely like those of the Bakuba and the Baluba in the southwest Congo region. Moreover, the netting costumes used by the Ovimbundu and the Vachokue of Angola closely resemble those used in some parts of the Congo basin, Cameroon, and from that point westward to Sierra Leone. Therefore, so long as comparisons are

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

limited to Africa itself, they are instructive in showing cultural traits of Angola against a broader background. 174 114

But if the inquiry is extended with a view to proving that African masks and costumes are derivatives from Oceania, there exists no acceptable evidence of generic relationship. The mere use of fiber skirts, of netting suits, and of bark cloth for masks, is not acceptable evidence for supporting a theory of derivation of African from Oceanic forms.

More important than the study of forms is the psychological background of masks and costumes in Africa and Melanesia. In "Origins of Education" I made a comparison of factors included in the initiation of boys in Africa and Melanesia. The boys are secluded, circumcised, instructed, harshly treated, and after a change of name are reintroduced to their villages at a dance in which masks and costumes are used.

Waiving the question of similarity of masks and costumes, do the psychological factors provide reasonable grounds for assuming generic relationship of initiation customs? Possibly the psychological setting suggests a single origin, but the matter is so largely subjective, that a decision cannot be made without further evidence of the correlation of forms, the details underlying their origin and use, and the establishment of a more definite and unbroken track of distribution. To have an intuition and a vague hypothesis is very different from the demonstration of a theory. Delafosse (Negroes of Africa, p. 3) pictures the peopling of Africa by Negro impacts from Asia on the east coast near Madagascar. If true, this suggestion would support the views of the Graebnerian school, but the theory is highly speculative.

The extent to which an observer may be misled by fortuitous resemblances in form has been demonstrated by a number of American anthropologists. Every investigator who attempts comparative study and classification is prone to unite concepts, customs, and artifacts which have only a superficial and misleading resemblance to one another. This failure to discriminate may be illustrated as follows: R. H. Lowie (Plains Indian Age-Societies, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Anth. Papers, No. 11, pp. 883–951) has shown the fallacy of assuming genuine cultural resemblances between Age-Societies of Plains Indians, the Masai, and the Melanesians, because the phenomena when analyzed prove to have different psychological settings, and they are structurally as distinct as are their geographical areas.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

174 W. D. Wallis points out the care that should be exercised in
114 assessing the evidential values of culture traits. These should be weighted according to their simplicity or complexity, and their logical connection with one another (*Amer. Anth.*, XXX, p. 94). The cultural factors of the Malayo-Negritan migration have not been considered in the manner advocated by Wallis.

Lowie examined apparently similar cases of exogamy, but found that these depended on different conditions; for example, exogamy might depend on either clan or locality (The Principle of Convergence in Ethnology, *Jour. Amer. Folk-lore*, XXV, pp. 24–42).

A. A. Goldenweiser shows that totemism has many social and psychological interpretations differing greatly according to locality. In order to include the many forms of totemism a broad definition has to be accepted. Totemism is indeed nothing more than a tendency of social units or individuals to become associated with symbols of emotional value (Totemism an Analytical Study, *Jour. Amer. Folk-lore*, XXIII).

Lowie further emphasizes the distinctive types of totemism, in order to show the fallacy of linking many different concepts under one term, without recognizing the broad significance of the term (*Amer. Anth.*, XIII, p. 189). This research shows Frobenius to be at fault in merely noting the presence of totemism and other traits without defining their forms and examining the psychological background.

An article by A. L. Kroeber and C. Holt (Masks and Moieties as a Culture Complex, *J.R.A.I.*, L, p. 452) has a special bearing on Graebnerian views with regard to the spread of cultures. Kroeber set out to test the validity of the statement that North American culture had been affected by the east Papuan layer of the Graebnerian culture stream, which was supposed to have brought masks and moieties to North America. The Graebnerian method assumes that a culture trait never develops twice; also that instances of geographical isolation of a trait must be ascribed to migration and subsequent loss in intervening areas. The conclusion of Kroeber, based on statistical examination of instances of conjoint occurrence of the two traits, indicates that the union of masks and moieties comes out fortuitously.

R. B. Dixon indicates several factors to which attention should be paid in making comparisons of culture traits (*Science*, XXXV, p. 46). In the first place there is the question of relationship on geographical and historical grounds. It is also important to know

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

what degree of complexity there is in the artifacts and beliefs which are under comparison. Reason and form, that is, psychology and morphology, are both important aspects of comparison. The work so far accomplished with regard to the Malayo-Negritan theory of African cultural traits fails to comply with the foregoing essentials of comparative study.

There is consensus of opinion against the Graebnerian hypothesis in its present form. E. S. Hartland reviews Graebner's "Methode der Ethnologie" (*Man*, 1914, No. 70) with the result that he finds Graebner too insistent on the value of forms as a criterion of generic relationship. In fact such a method may degenerate into pure subjectivity. F. Boas (*Science*, XXXIV, No. 884) takes the same point of view in remarking on the exclusion of the psychological field of inquiry; Graebner's method has a too mechanical character.

In view of this criticism, and as a result of personal observation of the culture elements of Angola, I am convinced that the somatological, linguistic, and cultural data for considering the spread of the Malayo-Negritan culture in Africa are not sufficiently understood to lead to a demonstration of any kind. For instance, Portuguese East Africa, the hypothetical starting point of the migration, is by no means well studied in detail, and the problem demands that data relating to the supposed area of introduction should be particularly complete.

The same criticism relates to the farthest point of west Africa reached by the supposed cultural stream from Melanesia. A theory which aims at showing generic relationship between secret societies of west Africa and Oceania cannot successfully rely only on general resemblances of masks and the use of netting costumes. Something more specific than a comparison of forms of artifacts and the occurrence of such ill-defined institutions as age-grades, totemism, and secret societies is essential in order to make the kulturkreis theory acceptable.

The problem of cultural relationships between the Ovimbundu and other African tribes is simplified in several ways. Geographical continuity exists between the African areas discussed, and to a great extent the cultural contacts described are matters of historical fact. Data relating to the Ovimbundu themselves are fairly complete; and what is equally important, there is trustworthy literature bearing on the areas surrounding the Ovimbundu. Therefore, comparisons do not rest on the study of a few simple forms, but on the cultures taken as a whole with regard to cultural traits of all kinds.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

174 177 Evidence adduced up to the present has indicated the relationship of cultural elements of the Ovimbundu to those of tribes immediately surrounding them (chapter X).

In addition to this, the ethnological facts of the present chapter have made it clear that the tribal life of the Ovimbundu cannot be explained by confining the inquiry to immediate culture contacts. The Ovimbundu have without doubt drawn very widely on African cultural streams during the growth of their present social pattern. The truth of this statement has just been illustrated by reference to ritual connected with blacksmiths, Bantu religious beliefs, the Bantu social system, African puberty rites, hunting appliances, musical instruments, and other cultural elements.

A consideration of the kulturkreis theory indicated that a search for the origins of Umbundu culture cannot profitably be extended to Indonesia and Melanesia. Therefore the final chapter is confined to a summary of types of African culture, with a view to showing the relationship of Umbundu culture to each of the main racial, linguistic, and cultural patterns that are known to have affected the African continent.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

since the language has Sudanic and Hamitic elements with some Semitic roots. The earliest relationships of African linguistic families, for instance Hamitic and Semitic, also Sudanic, Bantu, and Bushman, is a field for further research. To take only one instance of complexity, Bantu is divided into more than two hundred languages and innumerable dialects, whose origin, structure, and evolution have been treated by C. Meinhof (Introduction to the Phonology of the Bantu Languages, London, 1932; a translation, by A. Werner and N. J. von Warmelo, of Meinhof's Grundriss eine Lautlehre der Bantusprachen).

In conclusion of this summary of the background of African history, there arises the difficulty of ascribing to each of the races those cultural elements for which the race is responsible, either by primary invention within Africa, or by introduction from some source outside Africa. The difficulty may be illustrated by quotations relating to the iron industry of African Negroes. Rival theories claim origin of the craft in Asia, in Egypt, and among African Negroes themselves.

Seligman (Races of Africa, p. 158) states, "We may believe that the Negro, who is now an excellent iron worker, learnt this art from the Hamite." Torday writes (H. Spencer, Descriptive Sociology of African Races, preface, p. iii), "To state that Bantu civilization—or any civilization whatever—is due to the ancestors of such absolutely primitive tribes as the Hadendoa and Beja (identified by some with the enigmatic Hamites) presupposes that these people who were ignorant of agriculture, or the production of iron, and of all arts and crafts denoting a higher culture, who, as we know, have not progressed a step within the past five hundred years and considered all manual labor degrading, had the power to give that which they never possessed."

The complexity of argument relating to the origin of just one cultural trait, iron-working, can be judged by consulting the writings of W. Gowland (The Metals in Antiquity, *J.R.A.I.*, XLII, pp. 235–287), W. M. F. Petrie (The Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt), W. Belck (Die Erfinder der Eisentechnik, *Zeitsch. Ethn.*, XXXIX, pp. 335–381; XL, pp. 45–69; XLII, pp. 15–30), and F. Luschan (Eisentechnik in Afrika, *ibid.*, XLI, pp. 23–59).

Even with these reservations and disputed points in mind, it is yet possible to speculate with some accuracy respecting the origin and assembly of traits which, welded together, form the culture of the Ovimbundu.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

ASSEMBLING OF TRAITS

The data which have been assembled in relation to the Ovimbundu, if considered in conjunction with the analysis of African cultures made in the foregoing chapter, lead to the following historical reconstruction. 174

When somatic traits of the Ovimbundu are considered it is clear that the general type is removed from that of true Negroes. Among the Ovimbundu are persons of a slender, brown-skinned type, with some refinement of lips and nasal width; while other persons possess the opposites of these features, but in no instance as intensely as do true Negroes. I accept the view of physical admixture of Hamites with true Negroes and believe that types like the Ovimbundu and the Vakuanyama have resulted from infusion of Hamitic blood which has modified Negro somatic traits in the way mentioned. [142]

Linguistically the Ovimbundu have a pure form of Bantu speech. The Umbundu language is tonal, but there are few semantic words whose meaning depends on a high, middle, or low tone. Probably Umbundu should be classified with the southwestern Bantu languages, but further research may show that on structural grounds Umbundu has to be accorded an intermediate position between the southwestern and the central Bantu languages. Study of vocabulary definitely links Umbundu with the Ukuanyama language of the southwestern Bantu group, but conclusions based on comparison of vocabularies are hazardous because of the dissemination of Umbundu words by extensive caravan trade of the Ovimbundu. We may therefore be dealing with loan words and not with bifurcation from the same matrix. 174 197

When comparing the social pattern of the Ovimbundu with that of other African tribes the following elements of culture should be borne in mind. 174

(1) Traits associated with an archaic hunting culture.

(2) Factors typical of the culture of Negroes, both Bantu and Sudanic.

(3) Cultural traits from pastoral tribes of south and southwest Angola. These tribes speak Bantu languages but have somatic traits which are Hamitic, while their culture exhibits some main features of the Hamitic pastoral pattern.

Among the earliest elements of Umbundu culture would probably be the traits of hunting and food-gathering. The antiquity of hunting has been indicated by considering the wide distribution of appliances

174 of like kind. Furthermore, the details of ritual connected with the hunter's occupation, and the survival of these to the present day, tend to show that hunting was not a trait of late introduction. A people who adopted hunting when in an advanced state of their cultural history would not invent an elaborate ritual which is still connected with the initiation of young hunters, ancestor worship, and special modes of burial. Moreover, the Ovimbundu are primarily an agricultural people; therefore it is unlikely that at a late date in their cultural development they would take over hunting and its ritual as a means of augmenting their food supply. I conclude, therefore, that the elements of a hunting culture are ancient and fundamental.

To the archaic elements of hunting and food-gathering should perhaps be added the use of the musical bow, the bull-roarer, and the making of fire by twirling. The bull-roarer is an object associated with important ceremonies among many African and other tribes of the present day, though among the Ovimbundu the instrument is used only as a toy. This is probably a degradation of function associated with the known disappearance of initiation ceremonies. Making of fire by twirling is now of importance only as a ceremonial method of creating new fire at the time of building a village, during epidemics, and after the death of a king. But formerly the twirling method was the only means of ignition.

The most important cultural traits of the Ovimbundu are those which they possess in common with Negroes who speak Bantu languages. Most of the traits mentioned here as characteristic of the Bantu are also to be found among the Sudanic Negroes of west Africa.

Negro cultural traits which are or were prominent in the tribal life of the Ovimbundu are as follows:

Tooth mutilation and scarification of the body.

Blood brotherhood by exchange of blood.

Hoe cultivation by women.

Classificatory system of kinship terms and cross-cousin marriage.

A system of succession, inheritance, and family government in which the maternal uncle plays an important part.

Tribal government under a well-coordinated political system in which kings and village chiefs are of paramount importance.

Slavery as an economic institution.

Ritualistic slaughter and eating of slaves at the death of a king.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Tribal initiation for boys with use of masks, netting costumes, seclusion, circumcision, harsh treatment, change of name, and re-introduction into society. 174

The poison ordeal of general Negro type.

Religious ideas of a supreme being, Suku, Nzambi, or Kalunga, who is thought of as a creator. He is, however, far removed from all tribal affairs, and there is no sacrifice or appeal to him.

An active ancestor worship with good and bad spirits who require sacrifice and recognition by supplication through the agency of a medicine-man. Use of wooden figures in connection with this appeal to spirits. Great importance of the spirits of kings as arbiters in matters of tribal welfare.

Importance of medicine-men in conducting trial by ordeal, making rain, healing the sick, and consulting ancestral spirits by divination and the use of wooden images in which "medicine" is placed.

Methods of fishing with poisons and conical fish traps.

The technique and ritual of the blacksmith's craft.

Wood-carving which particularly resembles that of the southwest Congo region.

Making of bark cloth.

Types of musical instruments, including the friction drum, the marimba, tubular drums, flat drums, metal-keyed instruments, and many other forms which are typical of Negro culture, particularly that of the southwest Congo.

Weaving on a loom of central African type (now obsolete).

Coiled basketry and pottery.

The foregoing elements are associated to form the cultural pattern of the Ovimbundu. All these traits are characteristic of Bantu and Sudanic Negro culture in general. Therefore the Ovimbundu are most closely allied with Negroes, from the cultural point of view.

The elements taken by the Ovimbundu from pastoral tribes, whose culture has invaded east and south Africa, are: 174 177

Cattle and the social values attached to these, together with ceremonial rites which are characteristic of pastoral cultures. Such rites include burial of kings in oxhide, and the killing of oxen at the funeral feast; also the mounting of horns over the grave, and use of sacred fire.

Ideas of succession in the male line, whereby kingship passes to the eldest son of the principal wife, are more characteristic of pastoral than Negro systems.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

174 From the pastoral tribes of southern Angola the Ovimbundu
177 have adopted a peculiar type of assagai, a throwing club, and sandals.

Primarily the culture of the Ovimbundu is that of African Negroes with persistence of traits that have survived, possibly from a pre-Negro culture, which depended entirely upon food-gathering and hunting. Grafted on these traits are important elements from a pastoral culture which is generally conceded to be Hamitic.

European contacts led to the introduction of maize, manioc, sweet potatoes, and peanuts, so stimulating the indigenous hoe culture. This agricultural life was further encouraged by settlement in the Benguela Highlands, where temperature, rainfall, and open spaces favored a great expansion of agricultural pursuits, especially the growth of maize and beans.

Early contact with the Portuguese led to an encouragement of trade. Guns and powder, together with other European goods, were received in exchange for ivory and slaves. An increase in the supply of slaves led to changes in the social life, whereby the Ovimbundu gained more time and opportunity for extensive raiding and trading, by which means their wealth was further increased.

As time progressed, the nature of the contact with the Portuguese changed. Instead of alliances made on a commercial basis, the Portuguese gradually assumed control, the results of which are now distinctly felt in the disintegration of Umbundu tribal life.

The data supplied by personal field work, supported by a perusal of ethnological literature, suggest the foregoing summary as the briefest possible outline of the history of the Ovimbundu, the growth of their culture, and the nature of traits that have been welded together.

Cultural losses will now be considered, and in the final pages an explanation will be given of the way in which traits derived from various sources are associated to form a workable tribal system.

CULTURAL LOSSES

177 The loom and the conical furnace for smelting iron have disappeared in recent times because of the increasing importation of foreign cloth and the greater facility for obtaining scrap iron. Bark cloth, except in eastern Angola, is no longer made because traders are distributing European goods. For the same reason wooden hair-combs are going out of use. Drum signaling has declined with the disappearance of warfare, and for the same reason the double iron gong is rare.